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exerted a strong regulating and stimulating influence. He was a brilliant and inspiring lecturer; and it was into his professorial work that he threw the fulness of his strength, discerning, training, encouraging, and bringing forward the mathematical genius of a generation, and impregnating it, in his admirable courses, with fertile germs of new discovery. He was no less happy in addressing the Academy. M. Faye, in his speech at the grave of Liouville, tells us that he was in his prime a powerful scientific orator, and that he was equalled only by Arago in ability to give to a general scientific audience a sense of real insight into the abstruse conceptions of the higher analysis.

M. Liouville was chosen a Foreign Honorary Member of this Academy in 1859, as successor to Cauchy. We have lost in him one who has played an important part in the development of mathematical knowledge during the past half-century.

EMILE PLANTAMOUR.*

Emile Plantamour, Professor of Astronomy and Director of the Observatory at the University of Geneva, died at Geneva, September 7, 1882. He was born at Geneva, May 14, 1815, and received his early education in the old college founded by Calvin, after which he spent eight years in the then celebrated school of Hofrozl. In 1833 he entered the Geneva Academy, where he became one of the astronomer Gautier's most promising pupils. After graduating in philosophy, he resolved to make the study of astronomy the work of his life, a design in which he was encouraged by Gautier, who, on account of an affection of his sight, promised to vacate his chair in Plantamour's favor when the latter had completed his university education. From Geneva Plantamour proceeded to Paris, where he studied for two years under Arago. He was also a pupil of Bessel at Königsberg, where, in 1839, he took the degree of Doctor, the subject of his thesis being the methods of calculating the orbits of comets. From Königsberg he went to Berlin, and worked for some time with Encke, who recognized in his quickness of observation and aptitude for complex calculations his special fitness for the career to which he intended to devote himself. On his return to Geneva Plantamour received the double appointment of the Professorship of Astronomy in the Academy

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* This notice is taken chiefly from the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society of London, February, 1883.

(which has since been transformed into a University) and Director of the Observatory. In 1848 he accepted also the chair of Physical Geography, and he retained all three positions until his health began to fail him, a few months before his death. His publications chiefly related to atmospheric electricity, observations of comets, and meteorological observations made on the Great St. Bernard. Special reference should be made to the important investigations of the diurnal oscillations of the soil undertaken by him by means of spirit-levels, and of which accounts are given in the *Comptes Rendus* for 1878 and 1879. Much of his time was devoted to meteorology, and his papers in the *Bibliothèque Universelle* on the subject were numerous; he was also one of the most active members of the Helvetic Scientific Society for the observation of atmospheric phenomena. He devoted attention to geodesy, and in 1861 became the representative of Geneva on the Paris Geodetic Commission. He was also a useful member of the International Geodetic Association, which met a few years ago at Geneva. In connection with the Genevan Society of Arts he organized a watch and chronometer competition, which has proved of great value to the staple industry of Geneva. Watches and chronometers are sent to the Observatory and tested there, the results being published, and prizes awarded to the best time-keepers. Four years ago he added to the Observatory at his own expense a refractor of ten inches' aperture, and he erected the building for its reception. He was a man of fortune, and might have devoted his life to social enjoyment and ease; but he was deeply attached to science, and preferred to retain his posts at the University, although the modest salary he received scarcely covered his expenses.

Plantamour's early work on cometary astronomy must not be passed over unnoticed. One of his most elaborate investigations was his determination of definite elements of Mauvais's comet of 1844, which was observed from July 7 in that year to the middle of March, 1845, and therefore offered a favorable opportunity for the calculation of the true form of orbit. Plantamour's result was a somewhat notable one: after taking into account the effect of the attraction of the planets during the comet's visibility, he concluded that at the passage through perihelion in October, 1844, the comet was moving in an elliptical orbit with a period of revolution of 102,050 ± 3,090 years. In 1846 he made extensive calculations bearing upon the motion of the two heads of Biela's comet, the results of which will be found in No. 584 of the *Astronomische Nachrichten.* He further discussed the elements of what was called at the time "Galle's second comet," 1840,

II. (*Astron. Nach.*, No. 475, 476). In this paper he pointed out some anomalies in the intensity of the comet's light similar to what have been observed from time to time in other comets.

Plantamour was a Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences of the Institute of France, having been elected as successor to the elder Struve. He was also a Corresponding Member of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Turin, and an Associate of the Royal Astronomical Society of London. He was elected a Foreign Honorary Member of this Academy on March 13, 1878.

FRIEDRICH WÖHLER.

Friedrich Wöhler, after a long manhood full of the fruits of well-directed intellectual labor, after a tranquil, honored, happy old age, died on the 23d of September last, surrounded by a loving family, and in the full possession of his faculties. He was born on the 31st of July, 1800, in the village of Eschenheim, near Frankfort-on-the-Main. He entered the Gymnasium in Frankfort in his fourteenth year, and there his boyish fondness for experiment quickly ripened into a strongly marked taste for chemistry and mineralogy, for the study of both of which sciences he had accidental facilities which influenced his whole after life. At the age of twenty he entered the University of Marburg, where he passed a year, and where, in a small extemporized private laboratory, he began the study of the compounds of cyanogen, his first paper on that subject appearing in Gilbert's *Annalen*, in 1821. From Marburg he went to Heidelberg, and there worked in the laboratory of Leopold Gmelin, whose influence upon him was very marked, and who quickly perceived in him the promise of future eminence. Here he published two papers on cyanic acid. He had at this time the prospect of becoming a physician, and took his degree as Doctor of Medicine in September, 1823. The urgency of Gmelin decided him to devote himself exclusively to chemistry, and, after a brief correspondence and warm recommendation from Gmelin, Berzelius agreed to receive him into his laboratory. The charming account which he wrote in his old age of Berzelius himself, of his own residence and travels in Sweden and Norway, and of various distinguished men whom he met, is familiar to all chemists. Wöhler spent nearly a year in Sweden, forming a friendship with Berzelius which was never interrupted, and which ended only with the life of the latter. He at first settled in Heidelberg as Privatdocent, but by the advice of Berzelius, Gmelin, and Von Buch, in 1825 went to Berlin. and there became